6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

[1874-1911]

could be resolved in the matrilineal group.[78] Hastings, who gives the most detailed account of the matrilineal groups, which he calls sibs, tells us, 'There can be no exaction of fines or taking of slaves between the members of a sib group—the group members are supposed to pay each other's debts, and one who has wealth and refuses so to communicate may be secretly poisoned by the others. It is within the group of matrilineal sibs that most compacts, whether social or economic, are formed and operate. The same is true even of malevolent plots and anti-social practices, such as killing by witchcraft.'[79]

Clearly, the matrilineal groups in which the rich had to pool their wealth with poorer kinsfolk and in which trading arrangements[80] were made indicate the adaptation of the kinship system to the needs of the trade. It may be suggested that one of the functions of the double descent system was to separate the fields of village and chiefdom relations, established through patrilineal ties, from the field of commerce, credit, and the inheritance of wealth gained by trade. Thus the conflicts in which a man would be involved in one set of relations would not involve his other set of ties, and this distribution of stresses must have limited the strains set up by disputes. The distinction between the local group and the commercial group would also prevent heavy losses from trade striking a whole village simultaneously.[81] The credit institutions demanded by a trading system in which debt was frequently incurred were fitted into the kinship system, and associated with a device for levelling those who had become prosperous in the trade.

Unhappily the disintegration of the traditional social structure, and the accompanying loss of knowledge of it, prevented me from adding to, or even corroborating entirely, the written material on the form of the matrilineal groups.[82] It is not at all evident how the groups maintained integration, or how new

[78] Hambly, p. 200.

[79] Ibid., p. 92.

[80] Dr. Childs suggested to me that the core of the caravans might be composed of kin. However, the caravans were so large that they clearly could not be organized on a kinship basis. See also Serpa Pinto, p. 165.

[81] This point was suggested to me by Dr. Mary Douglas.

[82] I did not obtain any information on the size of the matrilineal group, the existence of heads of the groups, and the degree to which it was a congregation.

6:Edwards E-5 (1955-1956)1962
FP13 Mbundu FP13

bought in the towns, and men returning from South Africa are said to bring all sorts of goods including typewriters. The traders do not lend money though they sometimes give credit. The living standards of the traders are often low, some being unable to buy a truck, and having therefore to come to terms with someone who has one. I have even heard of traders having to eat the staple Umbundu mush (*pirão* in Portuguese).

While the traders play an extremely important role in the local economy they do not establish any permanent face-to-face relationship with the natives outside their household and store, because they are not interested in them and have no reason to be. This does not apply in the same way to African *assimilados*, actual or self-styled, of whom there were a few in the neighbourhood, who lived more or less in Portuguese style. Of these one in particular, Justino, made a hobby of settling disputes, and will therefore re-appear later on. Their main source of revenue was coffee-growing, and they would occasionally have local labour working for them. As they tend to identify themselves with the 'civilized' population, their attitude to the natives is not unlike that of the traders, but culturally and linguistically they are linked to the Ovimbundu villagers, and if of local origin will have kinship links too.

This group is significant because it is in the total social structure of Angola a link between the 'civilized' and 'non-civilized' communities. Both the *assimilados* and those pseudo-*assimilados* who have persuaded the natives that they are *assimilados*, identify themselves with the whites but are also linked much more closely with the natives than any other group. As the division into 'civilized' and 'non-civilized' is legally sanctioned on the grounds of culture not race, a group which participates to some degree in the cultures of both sections must be of great significance in the study of the means by which the whole society is integrated. In the neighbourhood where I worked this group of Europeanized Africans were few in numbers,[39] both absolutely and in relation to other parts of Angola.

[39] I only know of one genuine *assimilado* in the neighbourhood though there were others who claimed to be such. Galvão and Selvagem (p. 408) remark of the Cazengo concelho of northern Angola, 'The great number of civilised negroes, some planters incorporated in the European economic system, hastened the disintegration and confusion of the tribal institutions.'

[assimilados are Africans possessing Portuguese citizenship -- Analyst]